



Charlotte Mason's House of Education,
Scale How, Ambleside, UK, 2009

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any moral harm by playing with equals in bodily activity whose blood might not be equally "blue." The argument indeed would seem to run the other way. For if it be true, as I have ventured to assert, that there is no opportunity like a good honest game which so reveals what stuff folk are made of, what are the qualities of their nature, what is their inward character, it must be also true that it is of the utmost value in enabling those who join in it to discern where they may form friendships, and when they should hold back. The instinct of the young people will be exercised unconsciously to themselves, but really and effectually, to open out their affections towards those whom they find to be, not merely successful players, but courageous, good-tempered, fair and honest opponents. The playing field is, in fact, but an illustration of the wider world into which they will have to pass, and the training there provided, in the necessity of choice and in the power of making it well, is of life-long importance.

The fringe only of a large subject has, I am well aware, been now touched; but perhaps enough has been adduced to start a discussion which will fill up the deficiencies of this paper, and present new points of view. But if I may be hardy enough to prophesy, I shall venture to say that the general sense of this meeting will allow to games an educational value which we cannot afford our children to lose.

INDOOR GAMES.

BY HERBERT SUTTON.

AT the annual meeting in November of last year the subject of *The Educational Value of Games* was introduced by the Rev. R. H. Hart-Davis, but, as is often the case, it was impossible in the time allotted to consider the whole subject, and Mr. Hart-Davis, as might be supposed, naturally turned his and our attention to athletics, and confined his remarks exclusively to outdoor games. Indeed, in his paper he spoke of his subject being "The educational value of outdoor games." I take it for granted that this was simply on account of the impossibility of treating the whole subject in one short paper, and not because the writer attached little or no importance to indoor games. Similarly in confining my remarks to

indoor games, I wish it to be understood that I do not consider athletics to be of any less value. In the case of boys I should certainly give such games the first place. Although it is only the remnant of a subject, the committee thought that an evening might be profitably spent in considering indoor games from an educational point of view, especially at the beginning of another winter, and asked me to bring forward the remnant this evening.

Indoor games are numerous and varied, and it should be the object of parents, in some degree, to systematize their use so that their influence may be properly distributed, exercising the bodies, cultivating the minds and helping to form the characters of the children.

There are games of a romping nature, such as "Blind man's buff," "Turn the trencher," "Musical chairs," and "Post," and if Ruskin is right in placing among the important parts of education "the formation of habits of gentleness and justice," they have some educational value, as there is plenty of scope for the exercise and display of selfishness and unselfishness, roughness and gentleness, justice and favouritism, which is a form of injustice most easily appreciated and keenly felt by children. Then there are quieter games which, nevertheless, are not of a sedentary nature, and which are useful beyond any mere amusement they may afford. Pre-eminent among such stands "Dumb crambo," too well known I hope to need describing, which exercises the ingenuity as well as the imagination; for the players must not only have ideas, but must be able to present them to others in an intelligible way without the aid of speech, which is of course the usual means, and this often requires very considerable ingenuity, and is a great test of resourcefulness.

Bagatelle is useful in training the hand and eye, and may be made the occasion for lessons in mental arithmetic.

Games of a yet quieter nature, which involve sitting still, may, I think, be conveniently considered under three heads:—

1. Games of chance.
2. Games of skill and chance combined.
3. Games of skill.

Let us take as an example of the first division the old game of steeplechase, which has been copied in a thousand-and-one ways, but as the principle is the same in all we need only consider the original.

The apparatus consists of (1) a circular board with a neat rail round the circumference. A few inches within the circumference is a corresponding rail. Between the rails lines are drawn about half an inch apart as radii of the circle, and within the smaller circle the board is covered with green cloth. (2) Six or eight metal horses with their jockeys in various coloured jackets and caps to match. (3) Obstacles representing a brook, a flight of hurdles, a hedge, &c., &c., which are placed on the lines at varying distances. (4) A tee-to-tum, or dice and box.

A pretty, fascinating toy for children who love horses, as nearly all children do.

Now let us watch the game. The horses are placed on the starting line, each player appropriating to himself a particular horse. The tee-to-tum is spun by the players in turn, the horses being moved on according to the numbers that turn up. All goes well until the first fence is reached, when perhaps the leading horse will alight on the hurdles, and by the rules of the game has to go back to the starting point. With varying fortune the game proceeds until the dreaded brook is approached. Woe betide the luckless horse and rider who fail to clear it, for they are immediately placed *hors de combat*. What a sigh of relief comes from the owner of the leading horse as he escapes this fate, and what groans of disappointment are heard from all the other owners as the last chance of a change in the luck disappears. And so the first game has a certain amount of excitement, but as the children discover that there is no question of playing well or badly, interest soon flags and can only be revived by the supply of a packet of sweets or a threepenny bit as a prize—and so the game of chance is played for a stake—an excellent introduction to *Les petits chevaux* at the French Casino, Roulette at Monte Carlo, the races at Ascot Heath or Epsom Downs. But where is the educational value?

It is with a view to avoiding this evil that some parents forbid the use of the tee-to-tum, the dice box or even games of cards. But here I think they are mistaken, as they thereby shut out a large number of really interesting games which come under our second heading, which includes all games in which there is plenty of room for the exercise of skill, but where chance is so important a factor that an inferior player may reasonably hope to win occasionally.

To my mind this is a most useful class of games, because it is possible to interest children of different ages and capabilities, the element of chance providing all the advantages of the handicap without its disadvantages.

Attempt to organise a golf competition or a croquet club tournament without handicapping, and how many would be willing to enter? The play of every member of the club is known, and there is no question who will win the prize, or at most it rests between two or three. It is useless for others to play, and so no interest is taken. If players are handicapped, a much larger number will enter; but all handicappers know how difficult it is to give satisfaction, but in a game where success is sufficiently dependent upon skill to make it worth while to play your best, yet where luck plays a sufficiently important part to give the inferior player a chance, if by using his utmost exertions he keeps somewhere near the superior player, we have a widened area of interest which makes it possible for younger or duller children to enjoy games with those who are older or brighter. Instead then of barring altogether the tee-to-tum, the dice and the cards, let us see that the game combines with their use some opportunity for mental exercise, some possibility of playing well.

Take as an example the game of "Naval Hazard" (a favourite with my own boys). There is plenty of scope for skilful manœuvring both in the attack and the defence, while the spin of the tee-to-tum or fall of the dice introduces the uncertainty of cross currents and changing winds, and gives the little boy an opportunity of ramming one of his big brother's ships or escaping behind one of his own torpedoes.

The game of "Happy Families" is an excellent exercise for the memory, and can be played by quite little children in partnership with an older person—but please take care to get the new cards with ingeniously devised and artistically executed pictures of animals, instead of the original hideous representations of "Bung the Brewer," "Soot the Sweep," "Pots the Painter," &c., &c.

The numbers of games which may be played with ordinary playing cards and which combine skill and chance is legion, and it ought not to be difficult to make from them a selection which may usefully exercise the brain and lead on to those of a higher order of scientific attainment.

And this brings us to our 3rd division, viz., games of skill without the element of chance (or practically so).

It may seem at first sight that these will be difficult games and suitable only for elder children, but this is not so. There are simple games in which there is little or no chance. "Snap," for instance, will keep a child always on the *qui vive* and teach him to concentrate his mind on what he is doing. "Spellicans" is good training for the hand and eye. "Verbarium" and "Word Making and Word Taking" require close attention and quickness of thought, and give instruction in spelling. "Draughts" and "Military Tactics" lead on to "Chess," which is I suppose the most scientific of all games, and worthy to be played by men and women of all ages. And so almost from the cradle to the grave, at least from early childhood to mature manhood, we may greatly assist our education in the broadest sense by a judicious use of games.

[The Editor invites discussion on the subject of games.]

HOW FAR IS THE PRESENT METHOD OF EDUCATING GIRLS A SUCCESS?

BY MRS. DE GRUCHY GAUDIN.

ONE of the surest remedies for discontent is to call to mind the circumstances of those whose lot in life obliges them to forego many of the pleasures and luxuries which others have come to regard as almost necessities.

For the same reason, when we of to-day read and hear of the position, education and limitations which characterized the girlhood of the earlier generations, we cannot but return to the present with all its advantages, its reforms, its progress, with a deep feeling of gratitude to those who have made it possible for girls to live out their fuller life, and with a sense of shame if we fall out at all with our surroundings, and do not make the best use of what has already been placed within our reach.

Girls of to-day find themselves the centre round which much speculation and discussion revolve. The last forty years have been a transition period in the fortunes of girlhood, and we are still experiencing the tossings and unrest which are consequent upon any great revolution in thought and action. In fact, the currents do not yet all blow in the same direction, and many barks of girl-life are floated hither and thither as the current bears them, unless they are launched with a fixed determination as to what is the desired haven. Though the progress made in the efficiency of training has been so marvellous in recent years, and those of us who are benefitting from it cannot be too grateful to the conscientious noble women who persevered amidst unnumbered discouragements in carrying out their object, yet we must not allow ourselves to rest satisfied with results already attained.

The tendency and aim of higher education to-day is to fit women to take an equal place with men in the competition of life, and to make them capable of looking after their own interests. All are convinced that this is a necessary and worthy object. But unless it at the same time makes them